

September 8, 2004

Dear Representative:

This Labor Day week, you will have the opportunity to honor the hard working men and women of your district, and this nation, when the House considers the Obey overtime amendment to the FY 2005 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill. On behalf of the more than 1.4 million members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and their families, I strongly urge you to ***vote for the Obey overtime amendment***, which would restore overtime rights to millions of workers.

The Obey amendment would force the Department of Labor to rescind changes to the overtime eligibility rules that take away overtime rights from 6 million workers. At the same time it would leave in place an inflation adjustment that benefits low-income workers, albeit far fewer, we believe, than the DOL claims.

Two things are immediately clear about the DOL's final overtime eligibility regulation, there are workers, including some earning as little as \$24,000 annually, who will lose their overtime rights. And, the new rule will make it easier for employers to reclassify and declare jobs exempt from overtime pay. When workers are stripped of their overtime rights, employers can and will force them to work overtime for no additional pay.

There is no excuse for taking away workers' rights to overtime pay. There is nothing outdated about a fair day's pay for a hard day's work. And, it makes no difference whether you are a blue, pink, or *white*-collar worker.

Forcing workers to work overtime without compensation leads to longer work weeks and less time with families. If employers do not have to pay overtime compensation, or indeed any compensation for over 40 hours, employees will be right back where they began before the Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted. They will be overworked, underpaid, and serve at the whim of their employers.

House of Representatives
September 8, 2004
Page 2

Attempts to strip workers of their overtime rights should be recognized for what they are – an effort to undermine the 40 hour work week and a pay cut for hard working men and women.

Overtime rights are a hallmark protection for workers. It is one that workers fought for, and some died for. Indeed, Labor Day was founded as part of the original campaign for an 8-hour day and a 40-hour work week.

I strongly urge you to commemorate this past Labor Day and to honor the hard work of Teamsters and all working men and women by voting ***yes on the Obey overtime amendment***. The Teamsters Union considers the vote on the Obey overtime amendment as a vote on a core labor protection and will score this vote as a ***KEY VOTE***.

I hope that I can report to Teamster families in your state that you stood with them in defending their overtime rights.

Sincerely,

James P. Hoffa
General President

JPH/cwl